

PETER E SPRATT

Peter Spratt has been practising as a heritage and conservation engineer for many years. He is a civil engineer and also has a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies. His conservation experience includes about 200 studies and projects.

One of his major studies concerned the massive disintegration in the historic buildings at Tasmania's convict settlement at Port Arthur, built around 1845. Peter led the ground-breaking research and testing which showed that the damage was due to the presence of montmorillonite clay and the growth of salt crystals in the bricks. The problem was also present in sandstones used at the site. Peter developed comprehensive conservation measures involving the insertion of damp courses, refiring of bricks and sourcing of montmorillonite-free sandstone. Peter has since applied this knowledge to other historic buildings in Tasmania and elsewhere.

An example is the 13 metre high Raine Island Beacon, built in 1844, on a tiny island off the coast of North Queensland which marks a channel through the Great Barrier Reef. Built of phosphate rock the tower was found to be highly eroded. Peter developed comprehensive measures to restore the structure.

Masonry chimneys are one of the most visible remains of former industrial activity but they are vulnerable to damage from lightning and from wind and earthquake loadings. Peter has made recommendations for remedial works on several old chimneys.

The Royal Engineers Building in Hobart has been the home of Engineers Australia's Tasmania Division for the last 25 years, since Engineers Australia headed a campaign and fund raising for its restoration. Peter's detailed knowledge of its construction and defects was instrumental in achieving a successful outcome. He has recently provided a report on its present condition.

Peter became a member of the Tasmanian Heritage Council from its inception in 1996 and served three terms. His knowledge of all the sandstone sources in Tasmania has been invaluable. He has worked for the Council on conservation issues relating to the Richmond Bridge (1825), Ross Bridge (1836) and the Bridgewater Bridge (1947).

Peter has delivered several papers at Engineering Heritage conferences on his conservation activities. Tasmania Division gave him their inaugural Award of Merit in 1983 for his studies into the disintegration of historic buildings and associated remedial works.

Change Control

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